

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 321 291

CS 212 449

AUTHOR Donato, Marjorie
TITLE Cooperative Learning and Process Writing Experiences to Improve the Writing of Fifth Grade Students.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 98p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Audience Awareness; Classroom Environment; *Cooperative Learning; *Grade 5; Intermediate Grades; Learning Activities; Teaching Methods; Writing (Composition); *Writing Ability; *Writing Attitudes; *Writing Improvement; Writing Instruction; Writing Processes; Writing Research; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS Childrens Writing; *Writing Development

ABSTRACT

A course of study was researched, designed, and implemented to improve the writing of fifth-grade students. Objectives of the program were to develop more positive feelings about writing while increasing the quantity, quality, and variety of writing. Cooperative learning and process writing was discussed with the participants, their parents, and the teachers in the participating school. Fifth-grade students visited the classroom and were coached on how to use the writing process how and to work in a cooperative setting. Results indicated that the fifth-grade students demonstrated an increase in their quality, quantity, and variety of writing by the second month of the program. Students' writing quality improved 25% to 100% in terms of the basic elements of content and mechanics; voluntary journal writing increased by 59% to 685%; the quantity of voluntary finished works during sustained writing periods improved 33% to 300%; a broader range of audiences during voluntary writing periods increased 100% to 300%; and the students' feelings about writing showed a 25% to 88% improvement by the end of the writing program. Teachers participating in the program noted a 38% to 100% improvement in their students' writing. (Nine tables of data are included. Appendixes include: student and teacher creative writing survey, writing assessment instrument, length of daily journal entries chart, writing chart, compositional variety chart, writing audience chart, students' writing attitude survey, and teacher survey. Thirty-two references are attached.) (MG)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED321291

Cooperative Learning and Process Writing Experiences
to Improve the Writing of Fifth Grade Students

by

Marjorie Donato

Cluster XXIX

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

MARJORIE DONATO

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- ☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

A Practicum II Proposal presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1990

CS212449

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: *Dalne M. Dola*
Dalne Dola

Principal
Title

Hudson, Florida
Address

5-14-90
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Marjorie J. Donato under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

7-9-90
Date of Final Approval of
Report

Edm. W. Anderson
William Anderson, Ph.D.,
Advisor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TITLE PAGE.	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
 Chapter	 Page
I INTRODUCTION.	1
Description of Work Setting and Community .	1
Writer's Work Setting and Role.	2
II STUDY OF THE PROBLEM.	8
Problem Description	8
Problem Documentation	10
Causative Analysis.	15
Relationship of the Problem to the Literature.	16
III ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS	24
Goals and Expectations.	24
Behavioral Objectives	24
Measurement of Objectives	27
Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events .	30
Description of Plans for Analyzing Results.	30
IV SOLUTION STRATEGY	33
Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions	33
Description and Justification for Solution Selected	39
Calendar Plan	45
Time Line	52
REFERENCES.	54

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Results of Student Creative Writing Survey. .	11
2	Results of Teacher Creative Writing Survey. .	14
3	Results of Pre/Post Writing Assessment Instrument	53
4	Results of Monthly Average Leangth of Daily Journal Entries	55
5	Results of Writing Tally.	56
6	Results of Compositional Variety Chart. . . .	58
7	Results of Writing Audiences Chart.	59
8	Results of Student Writing Attitude Survey. .	60
9	Results of Pre/Post Teacher Survey.	61

Appendices

Page

A	STUDENT CREATIVE WRITING SURVEY	75
B	TEACHER CREATIVE WRITING SURVEY	77
C	WRITING ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT	79
D	MONTHLY AVERAGE LENGTH OF DAILY JOURNAL ENTRIES CHART.	81
E	WRITING CHART	83
F	COMPOSITIONAL VARIETY CHART	85
G	WRITING AUDIENCES CHART	87
H	STUDENTS WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY.	89
I	TEACHER SURVEY.	91

ABSTRACT

Cooperative Learning and Process Writing Experiences to Improve the Writing of Fifth Grade Students. Donato, Marjorie J., 1990: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Cooperative Learning/Elementary Education/Elementary School Language Arts/Learning Activities/Process Writing/Teaching Methods/Writing Improvement/Writing Instruction

A course of study was researched, designed, and implemented by the writer to improve the writing of fifth-grade students. The primary goal was to increase the writing quality, quantity, and variety of fifth-grade student by means of cooperative learning experiences along with curriculum adjustments through use of the writing process. The objectives of the program were to develop more positive feelings about writing while increasing the quantity, quality, and variety of writing.

The writer discussed cooperative learning and process writing with the participants, the parents of the participants, and teachers in the writer's school, set up a writing activities center, made a schedule for fifth grade students to visit the classroom, coached students on how to work in a cooperative setting, and how to use the writing process.

The result of the program was a more self-confident target group of writing students. The fifth-grade students demonstrated an increase in their quality, quantity, and variety by the second month of the program. Students writing quality improved 25% to 100% in terms of the basic elements of content and mechanics, voluntary journal writing increased by 59% to 685%, the quantity of voluntary finished works during sustained writing periods improved 33% to 300%, the variety of compositional writing during voluntary writing periods increased 67% to 300%, a broader range of audiences during voluntary writing periods increased 100% to 300%, an improvement in the students' feelings about writing showed a 25% to 88% improvement by the end of the writing program. The teachers trying the program noted a 38% to 100% improvement in their students' writing. Other teachers requested information in order to implement the writing program for their students.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The writer's community was originally a small southern fishing village that within its 110 years of existence had grown to a semirural city with shopping centers, large subdivisions, and a regional hospital. The population in this formerly small community had grown to over 25,000 residents and continued to grow and change each and every day. The population was a mixture of retired citizens, families with children, and transients who moved to the writer's area since the weather remained mild all year.

The school system was the largest employer in the county. It employed approximately 1,900 teachers and more than 2,000 support personnel. The county public schools currently had an enrollment of approximately 30,000 students in grades kindergarten through twelfth. There were 38 schools with three in the planning stage for the next two years. The county had 23 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, 1 vocational school, 6 high schools, 2 adult

education centers, and an Energy Management Center to enhance the science curriculum. The school board consisted of five elected board members who served for a period of four years as the policy making overseers of the county school system (Report of the Superintendent and School Board, 1988).

The instructional program was comprehensive and uniform for all students enrolled in grades kindergarten through twelfth. The teachers structured their own curriculum within the guidelines that were set by the school district and in conjunction with the local administration. The curriculum was further refined within the classroom as determined by the student's developmental level, individual needs, and particular learning style (--- Elementary School Five Year Study for --- Association of Schools and Colleges, 1987-1988).

The district curriculum guidelines were adhered to by all school employees. The philosophy and objectives of the district were woven into all curriculum areas.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer's school was 21 years old and serviced 780 students. The school was located in a low to middle economic area. The school population was somewhat transient with 42% of the sixth-graders enrolled for five years or

more. One-third of the students were on free or reduced lunch and 40% of the students lived with both natural parents, thereby reflecting the national trend of single parent and extended families.

The teachers and staff were helpful to one another and cared deeply about providing a sound education for the students they taught and with whom they came in contact. On a recent survey the teachers stated that they were satisfied with the school and the programs at the school.

A majority of the teachers at the school had spent a decade teaching at the school site. The teachers at the writer's school had spent an average of 17 years teaching. The teachers had helped to develop the philosophy of the school. The school philosophy stated that:

We, the faculty of --- Elementary School, believe that education is synonymous with growth. All living organisms are equipped with a built-in pattern for growth; yet, within this basic pattern, each individual is different from all others.

Growth is physical, mental, social, emotional, and intellectual. Education must encompass all aspects of growth to develop within the child the possibility of living a full and enriched life as a contributing member of our changing society.

We recognize each student as an individual of

4

worth, dignity, and respect. Therefore, the learning environment must be diverse, flexible, comfortable, and appropriate for all.

Only through a common purpose shared by the community and school, can we hope to fulfill the educational needs of every child in our school. (--- Elementary School Five Year Self Study for --- Association of Schools and Colleges, 1987-1988, p. 17).

The writer became a fifth grade teacher at the school under study in 1984. The writer's responsibilities included the following:

To sequence instruction on the basis of each child's level of achievement and individual potential.

To structure class activities capitalizing on similarities of students.

To guide each child to self-realization and optimum potential.

To help the child to develop into a mature person.

To afford opportunities for students to learn to act in a socially acceptable manner.

To provide students with occasions to develop and use the processes of problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making.

To create a learning atmosphere that encourages

freedom of expression, creativity, self-discipline, motivation, and acceptance of responsibility.

To evoke awareness of the richness of our cultural heritage as well as living in a free nation.

To continually improve communication between the school and community and to encourage more parental and community involvement.

To instill an appreciation of our natural environment as a whole.

To focus vision beyond just our own country and citizens, to include with caring and compassion, all peoples in all lands of the world. (--- Elementary School Five Year Self Study for --- Association of Schools and Colleges, 1987-1988, p. 17).

The writer had the following specific responsibilities for the 1989-1990 school year:

To educate 25 fifth-grade students.

To follow the county curriculum.

To pace the students according to county guidelines.

To employ a variety of teaching techniques.

To establish and maintain open lines of communication with students, parents, and other professionals.

To continue to grow professionally through

programs offered in the county and institutions of higher learning.

To follow the county and school stated objectives. (Basic Educational Programs in --- County , 1988-1989, p. 3).

The county elementary level language arts program was structured around the Developmental Writing Program, the adopted language arts text, and a special bilingual program for non-English dominant students.

The Developmental Writing Program was adopted by the writer's county prior to the 1988/1989 school year as the core of the language/composition program so that the students learned writing in a more meaningful way (Basic Educational Programs in --- county, 1988-1989). Students made use of the prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing stages of the writing process while working on student generated topics when using the Developmental Writing Program. The scope and sequence of the program was organized around a framework of skills instruction to provide systematic writing instruction by increasing levels of complexity of thought and sophistication as the four levels of development were implemented in the program. A base-line assessment taken at the onset of the program by having students develop two writing samples on a teacher-selected topic is used to select the appropriate

level for the students. The Developmental Writing Program Teacher Guide was a resource book made available to instructors. It consisted of skills-based activities to be used with the four proficiency levels.

The county adopted language textbook was to be used as a resource guide in conjunction with the Developmental Writing Program. The adopted text was to give scope and sequence to specific areas of the curriculum when needed as determined by the instructor (Basic Educational Program in --- County, 1988-1989).

Non-English dominant students were provided with either bilingual instruction in a self-contained classroom or a bilingual language tutor for 3 to 6 hours a week based on need as determined by a screening procedure conducted by a bilingual teacher using a county approved instrument (Basic Educational Program in --- County, 1988-1989).

The writer's school followed the curriculum and guidelines set up by the school district and provided the students with the best educational experiences possible.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Many fifth-grade students in the writer's language arts class seemed not to enjoy writing. The students who did not look forward to writing appeared to have little or no confidence in their writing ability and avoided writing because they thought their ideas were not good enough. When students did write, they wrote on limited topics and many of them did not want to share their written work with others, often stating that they were embarrassed of their writing abilities. These otherwise very capable students who were so creative with the spoken word, just seemed to give up when it came to the written word.

All too often fifth-grade students did not transfer the lessons taught in language arts class to their written work and made many punctuation, capitalization, grammatical, and spelling errors.

Students had difficulty understanding and making proper use of editing techniques and often felt that their final product did not reflect their thoughts and ideas

the way that they meant to write them. Students did not proofread effectively even when they were instructed to choose a peer to work with before handing in their finished work.

Many fifth-grade students had difficulty with the State Student Assessment Test (SSAT) in the area of writing. Many students needed to be remediated and retested in the area of writing when the tests were returned to the school. Students as well as the writer felt pressured when working on the skills since proof of mastery must be exhibited prior to a student's promotion to sixth grade. Many fifth-grade students thought of writing only as skills because of the emphasis on skills and passing this test.

Many teachers at the writer's school had stated that they would like to have helped their students improve their writing but even with the school district's adoption of the Developmental Writing Program the teachers continued to find themselves at a loss to help students become better writers.

If the problem were solved students would have enjoyed writing more fully, internalized language arts lessons and used the knowledge in other areas of the curriculum to express themselves more effectively, have had more confidence in their writing ability, needed less remediation and retesting on the State Student Assessment Test (SSAT),

and viewed themselves as writers due to repeated successful experiences in the area of writing.

The problem was that the writing of many fifth-grade students was lacking in quality, quantity, and variety.

Problem Documentation

The students, who would have been fifth-grade students during the 1989/1990 school year, took the State Student Assessment Test (SSAT) for the third-grade students in 1987. The scores had dropped 4% in the area of writing from the third-grade students tested using the same (SSAT) measurement in 1986 (--- Elementary School Annual Report 1987-1988). The SSAT scores had gone down in the past but this was the most dramatic drop indicating that a downward pattern may have been developed and a problem existed.

A Student Creative Writing Survey (see Appendix A) created by the writer was given to 60 fourth-grade students who would have been in the fifth-grade during the 1989/1990 school year. Over half of the students stated that they had not enjoyed writing stories, avoided writing stories when not in school, felt nervous when asked to write stories, felt their ideas were not good enough to write about, never kept a journal, and very seldom wrote stories to share with another person other than the teacher. A majority of the students stated that they had felt writing

was an important way to communicate, wanted to have been better writers, and would have liked to learn how to have been better writers, yet, many of the same students stated that they did not feel that more school time should have been spent on writing. For the results of The Student Creative Writing Survey refer to Table 1.

Table 1

Results of Student Creative Writing Survey

Question	Never	Sometimes	Always
1. Do you enjoy writing stories?	32*	16*	12*
2. Do you ever write stories when you are not in school?	50	8	2
3. Do you think that writing is an important way to communicate your thoughts and ideas?	15	12	33
4. Do you want to be a better writer?	0	25	35
5. Do you think that more school time should be spent on writing?	30	22	8
6. Do you feel nervous when your teacher tells the class that you are going to write a story in class?	6	22	32
7. Have you ever written a story to share with another person other than your teacher?	36	18	6
8. Have you ever kept a journal?	55	5	0
9. Have you ever felt that your ideas were not good enough to write about?	10	25	25
10. Have you ever felt that you would like to learn how to write better?	0	38	22

*Total number of students = 60

Thirty of the students in the fourth-grade during the 1988/1989 school year, were asked to write brief statements about how they felt about writing. Twenty-eight of the 30 statements collected were negative including such comments as:

I don't like writing because I already have enough work.

I get mad because my stories are boring and it usually isn't fun.

I feel embarrassed because I think it won't be any good.

My hands really get tired because I have been writing since first-grade.

I think that writing is just wasting my time and then I have to do my regular work for homework.

When I write stories I feel lost and a little bit sad.

It is very hard to write and share a story.
Only 2 of the 30 statements were positive including such remarks as:

Writing is sometimes easy.

It is fun to write, sometimes.

The results of the student statements demonstrated the existence of a problem indicating a need for change to improve the students' attitudes about writing.

A Teacher Creative Writing Survey (see Appendix B) created by the writer was given to 10 teachers from various grade levels at the writer's school who were willing to fill out the survey. A majority of the teachers stated that they felt that their students needed to improve in writing since the students had had trouble with writing complete sentences, with punctuation and with passing language tests. Over half of the teachers stated that they did not have students write stories on a daily basis and many times avoided teaching writing since they felt frustrated when correcting all of the students' grammatical errors. Over half of the teachers also stated that they felt that lessons taught in language arts class did not always carry over to other areas of the curriculum when the written word was needed. A majority of the teachers surveyed felt that even when students wrote stories the students were reluctant to share their work with others. All of the teachers had wanted a guide to teach writing that would have complemented the language arts text as well as the Developmental Writing Program. The Teacher Creative Writing Survey results indicated that a problem had existed in the area of writing and the teachers had looked for a way to help their students become more successful when writing. For the results of the Teacher Creative Writing Survey refer to Table 2.

Table 2

Results of Teacher Creative Writing Survey

Question	Never	Sometimes	Always
1. Do you feel that your students need to improve their writing skills?	0*	2*	8*
2. Do you have your students write on a regular basis?	4	4	2
3. Do your students have difficulty writing complete sentences?	1	3	6
4. Do your students have trouble with punctuation?	0	3	7
5. Do your students score low on language tests?	1	4	5
6. Do you feel frustrated when correcting students' stories due to mistakes?	0	3	7
7. Do your students want to share their original stories?	3	5	2
8. Do you feel that teaching writing skills from your textbook carries over to writing in other areas?	4	5	1
9. Do you avoid teaching creative writing?	1	3	6
10. Do you feel that you would teach more creative writing if you had a guide to teach creative writing geared to the K-6 grades that is easy to follow and compliments our language textbook and the Developmental Writing Program?	0	0	10

* Total number of teachers = 10

The surveys, student statements, and State Student Assessment Test (SSAT) results all indicated that a need existed for students to learn how to write better while enjoying writing more fully.

Causative Analysis

Many students in the writer's fifth-grade language arts class arrived with poor language arts backgrounds, possibly due to the quality of teaching, which showed up when students expressed themselves through the written word. Often students were very much aware of their weakness in writing and were embarrassed by their efforts. Many of these students had developed negative feelings about expressing their feelings, thoughts, and ideas in writing.

Students were not encouraged to write their feelings, thoughts, and ideas on a daily basis and did not spend time on writing as they did with other subjects such as spelling and math.

Students were not encouraged to share their written work with their peers, parents, and teachers, therefore, did not realize that writing was an important means of communication in this age of audio and video communications.

Many students did not think in terms of an audience and a purpose when writing and, therefore, did not write for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Many teachers felt a need for a stronger writing program but seldom focused on trying to better understand the writing process. Even when the writer's school had tried to encourage teachers to use the prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing stages of the writing process by adopting the Developmental Writing Program which focuses on skills, teachers continued to feel a need for a stronger skills-based program and had not used the adopted program when they taught writing.

Many students as well as teachers in the writer's school did not realize that writing was more than just communicating but for the exploration of inner thought and feelings, organizing of experiences, and the constructing of meaning, too.

The language program, as it stood in the writer's school, did not meet all the needs of the students in order to have helped them improve their writing while it helped them develop a love of writing.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A preliminary review of the literature indicated that some approaches to the improvement of writing instruction had been decidedly more effective than others. Those that seemed more effective were the use of cooperative learning experiences, the use of the writing process, the use of

instructional approaches which include teacher modeling of writing, activities that help students write for a variety of audiences as purposes such as journal writing, letter writing, and the writing of stories for different audiences and purposes, positive feedback, skills instruction as needed based on individual student's writing needs, and the use of monitoring written work through student work samples and anecdotal records. The approaches that seemed to be generally ineffective were the lack of student interaction with classmates as they wrote, an over emphasis on the publishing of written work instead of how the student arrived at it, negative or no feedback about written work, and skills instruction in isolation from purposeful writing.

Cooperative learning had been shown to have a relationship to how students learn. Slavin (1981) stated that when students worked in a cooperative setting they were better able to relate subjects being taught to their own lives, better internalize concepts being presented, and learned the joy of working in a shared setting. Vygotsky (1978) suggested that the existence of a close relationship between talk and writing and, therefore, social interaction could only help the writer expand ideas and write more effectively. Dyson (1987) concurred with Vygotsky in stating that when students interacted with classmates while

in the classroom there may have been a link to their achievement especially in beginning writing.

Erickson (1989) stated that collaboration had a positive effect on the quantity as well as the quality of students' work produced. Smith (1983) suggested that collaborative techniques had a much greater positive effect on learning than had been realized since writing could have been learned coincidentally from interactions with others very much the way babies learned to speak by listening to others around them. Pierce and Van Houten (1984) agreed by stating that when students worked in partnership within the classroom they tended to learn faster and seemed to take on more responsibility for their own learning. Teale (1982) suggested that when students interacted with their peers while writing and the teacher took on the role of a facilitator students may very well have learned to write more effectively. Brandt (1988) concurred with Teale in stating that when the teacher took on the role of the facilitator while students worked in a cooperative setting students learned more effectively and exhibited fewer discipline problems.

Slavin (1981) stated that students who worked independent of others may have developed feelings of isolation and frustration which may actually have caused students not to master materials presented to them as

effectively as when they worked in a cooperative setting.

Processed writing had been shown to have a positive effect on the writing of students. The writing process was advocated by many teachers and theorists (Atwell, 1989; Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983; Murray, 1982; Routman, 1988) since they stated that a more effective way to teach students to write was to allow students to use all of the options when writing that real authors used. The stages included prewriting, writing, rewriting, and publishing.

Butler and Turbill (1987) stated that when writing on a wide range of topics of their own choosing for a variety of audiences along with conferencing with the teacher while working at their own pace during frequently scheduled blocks of time helped students develop writing skills.

Graves (1978) and Smith (1983) stated that when students learned through processed writing they developed a feeling of ownership for what they wrote due to their very own selection of topics that were meaningful to them and, therefore, they viewed themselves as writers and became more successful when writing.

Murray (1982) stated that when the writing process of how the students wrote from the very beginning was emphasized, instead of only looking at and grading the finished product, never caring or knowing how the students got there, students could have become better writers.

Smith (1979) stated that when students viewed writing as something that was natural as well as purposeful they would have written more effectively.

Graves (1983), Murray (1982), and Smith (1983) found that an over emphasis on the end product of writing with little or no attention to how the student arrived at it may very well have caused students never to learn to write.

The use of teacher modeling of the writing process, activities that helped students write for a variety of audiences as well as purposes such as journal writing, letter writing, and writing stories for different audiences and purposes, the use of positive feedback, and the teaching of skills have been indicated as possible instructional approaches to have had a positive effect on the writing of students.

Burchby (1988), Calkins (1978), and Graves (1983) suggested that teacher modeling was not only a way for students to become familiar with the writing process by having the students observe the teacher go through all of the thinking and rethinking that everyone needed to go through in order to develop a finished product, but for the teacher to develop the feeling of being a writer, too, and, therefore, the teacher and the students became writers together.

Heinze (1987) stated that journal writing may have

helped students gain insights into their feelings while they wrote and, therefore, saw that writing is for more than just communicating with another person. Staton (1980) agreed with Heinze when he stated that journal writing was a very satisfying way to express and analyze inner-feelings on a regular basis.

Graves (1983) stated that students needed to be aware of, as well as, write for an audience and focus their efforts whenever and for whatever they wrote. Reetz (1987) concurred with Graves and stated that when students wrote letters they truly discovered writing for a very specific audience as well as for a very specific purpose.

Smith (1979) found that when writing was natural and purposeful to students, students learned to write. Murray (1982) stated that in order to give meaning and purpose to their writing students needed to find and develop their own topics, possibly through collaboration with others including the teacher and classmates.

Cooper (1979) stated that positive expectations needed to be demonstrated by the teacher when the students were learning so that they were better able to internalize the subject being taught. Good (1981) agreed with Cooper by stating that positive feedback could have produced positive results in subjects being taught. Graves (1983) stated that while conferencing with students and helping them

through the writing process teachers were able to see problems that needed to be addressed either individually or in small groups so that students actually mastered skills as they came up in their writing in a positive, supportive setting. Graves found that when skills were taught in isolation from purposeful writing, students would not learn the skills. Cooper and Good concurred with Graves when they stated that when students did not receive positive feedback for what they had learned it may have stopped them from learning. The monitoring of writing through work samples and anecdotal records often provided valuable information for assisting writers according to Graves (1983). Graves found that observing how a student develops as a writer by keeping a folder on writing done by the student complete with anecdotal records as the student went through the writing process is a most effective method by which teachers were able to assess the student's ability effectively in order to aid the student to improve in writing as the writer writes. Murray (1982) concurred with Graves in stating that there should have been an on-going assessment of the student's writing as the student proceeded through the writing process and not with an occasional test on isolated skills to evaluate the growth of the student's writing. Smith (1983) agreed in stating that when growth in writing was measured by using mechanical

correctness, the only result may have been to cause students to not want to write and eventually stop writing.

Limited student interaction while writing, an over emphasis on the end products when writing, negative or no feedback, and the teaching of skills in isolation may very well have been at the root of the problem and caused students to have been unable to develop their writing abilities and, therefore, demonstrated poor quality, quantity, and variety when writing.

CHAPTER III
ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The writer's goal in the practicum was to increase the writing quality, quantity, and variety of fifth-grade students by means of cooperative learning experiences along with curriculum adjustments through use of the writing process when fifth-grade students wrote.

Behavioral Objectives

During the eight-month practicum implementation the following objectives were projected to be attained:

1. Each student's quality of writing will be more complete in terms of including the basic elements of content and mechanics. The basic elements of content including organizational structure, sentence structure, paragraph structure, topic used, and audience awareness and the areas of mechanics including grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and handwriting

will be used to measure quality. A 20% increase in quality will be demonstrated when the student's first and last writing samples are compared by using the Writing Assessment Instrument (see Appendix C) developed by the writer.

2. Each student will increase the quantity of voluntary writing in terms of increasing the number of words written and the number of works produced.
 - a. Each student will increase the quantity of voluntary writing when the writer measures the average number of words per day of student journal entries at the end of each month of the practicum implementation. Each student will demonstrate a gain of 20% when the first average is compared to the last average.
 - b. Each student will increase the quantity of voluntary writing when the writer measures the number of finished works during sustained writing periods. When samples taken the first and last month of the program are compared, a 20% increase in the number of works completed will be demonstrated.

3. Each student will increase the variety of writing by increasing compositional range and audience range.
 - a. Each student will increase by 20% the variety of writing during sustained writing periods by the end of the practicum by using more of a variety of the six basic compositional forms including: description, exposition, persuasion, expression, narration, and poetry when work completed during the first two months of the program is compared to work completed the last two months of the practicum.
 - b. Each student will increase by 20% the variety of writing during voluntary writing periods by writing for a broader range of audiences including: the teacher, classmates, people known , and people unknown when voluntary writing completed the first two months is compared to voluntary writing completed the last two months of the program.
4. When given a pre and post Student Writing Attitude Survey (see Appendix H) developed by the writer, each student will demonstrate a positive improvement in feelings about writing by 20%.

5. Teachers at the writer's school will be presented with an in-service on how to implement the writer's program, asked to try the program, and to measure the change in their students' writing due to the program by filling out a pre and post Teacher Survey (see Appendix I) created by the writer. A change of 20% will be demonstrated when the pre and post surveys are compared.

Measurement of Objectives

Objectives must be evaluated throughout any program in order to determine the program's success or failure. The objectives were measured by the following for evaluation purposes:

1. Each student's quality of writing will be more complete in terms of including the basic elements of content and mechanics by 20% when the student's first voluntary writing sample is compared to one completed the last month of the program by using the Writing Assessment Instrument (see Appendix C) developed by the writer. The content areas of organizational structure, sentence structure, paragraph structure, topic used, and audience awareness will be measured numerically on a scale of

1 to 3 with 1 meaning no development, 2 meaning slight development, and 3 meaning well developed to generate scores. The mechanics area of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and handwriting will be measured numerically on a scale of 1 to 3 with 1 meaning severe errors, 2 meaning frequent errors, and 3 meaning no or few errors to generate a score.

2. Each student will increase the quantity of voluntary writing in terms of increasing the number of words written and the number of works completed.
 - a. Each student will demonstrate a gain of 20% when the number of words in daily journal entries are averaged each month during the practicum and the first average is compared to the last average by means of a tally kept on the Monthly Average Length of Daily Journal Entries Chart (see Appendix D).
 - b. Each student will demonstrate a gain of 20% when the number of works completed during sustained writing periods the first month and the last month of the practicum are tallied on the Writing Chart (see Appendix

E) and compared numerically.

3. Each student will increase the variety of writing by increasing compositional range and audience range.
 - a. Each student will increase by 20% the variety of writing during sustained writing periods by the end of the practicum by making use of a variety of the six compositional forms including: description, exposition, persuasion, expression, narration, and poetry when the first and last two months of the practicum are compared numerically by means of a tally kept on the Compositional Variety Chart (see Appendix F).
 - b. Each student will increase by 20% the variety of writing during voluntary writing periods by writing for a broader range of audiences including the teacher, classmates, people known to the student, and people unknown to the student when voluntary writing the first two months and the last two months of the program are tallied on the Voluntary Writing Audiences Chart (see Appendix G) and compared numerically
4. When given a pre and post Attitude Survey (see

Appendix H) having to do with writing, each student will demonstrate a positive improvement in feelings about writing when the surveys are compared. The numerical values of 1 for never, 2 for sometimes, and 3 for always will produce scores for each student.

5. Teachers at the writer's school will be presented with an in-service on how to implement the program, asked to try the program, and asked to measure any changes in their students' writing due to the program by filling out a pre and post Teacher Survey (see Appendix I) created by the writer. The numerical values of 1 for never, 2 for sometimes, and 3 for always will produce scores and the pre and post differences will be compared numerically.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Many fifth-grade students who have been in the writer's classroom in the past and many fourth-grade students who were to be in the writer's classroom for the 1989/1990 school year demonstrated a need for a change in the existing language arts program in order to improve their writing abilities. The poor language arts backgrounds, negative feelings about writing as well as lack of confidence in their writing ability, as shown by the poor performance on the State Student Assessment Test (SSAT), Student Creative Writing Survey (see Appendix A), and the student statements about writing, demonstrated that students who were coming to the writer's fifth grade class were having difficulty with writing and a change was needed.

The teachers in the writer's school also indicated that they, too, felt frustrated when it came to the students' writing abilities when a Teacher Creative Writing Survey (see Appendix B) was filled out. The Teachers who filled out the survey indicated that they were in need

of a new approach to teaching writing.

The teacher and student surveys, student statements, and the SSAT results all highlighted a need for change in the existing language arts program at the writer's school to improve the writing of the students.

The review of the literature indicated that some approaches to the improvement of writing instruction had been decidedly more effective than others. The approaches that seem more effective were the use of cooperative learning experiences, use of the writing process, use of instructional strategies which included teacher modeling of writing techniques, activities that helped students to write for a variety of audiences as well as purposes such as journal writing, letter writing, and the writing of stories for different audiences and purposes, the use of positive feedback, teaching of skills instruction as the need arose based on the students' writing, and the use of monitoring of written work through work samples and anecdotal records. The approaches that appear to be ineffective were skills instruction in isolation from meaningful writing, negative or little feedback about the student's writing, an over emphasis on the end product with little attention as to how a student got there, and little or no interaction with others in the classroom while writing.

Slavin (1981) and Vygotsky state that when students work in a cooperative setting the interaction can only help them to learn more effectively. Slavin finds that when the students work in isolation from one another they may feel frustrated and develop a feeling of isolation and therefore not work up to their potential, therefore, making working in isolation an ineffective instructional approach. Erickson agrees by stating that collaboration effects the quantity and the quality of students' work. Teale (1982) suggests that when students interact with their peers while the teacher takes on the role of the facilitator students benefit from the interaction with their classmates while being guided by the teacher.

Processed writing has been shown to have a positive effect on student writing. Graves (1983) advocates processed writing as a way to help students develop their writing ability since the student actually goes through the steps that a real writer does complete with developing a topic of their own choosing, using the prewriting, writing, rewriting, and publishing stages, addressing an audience, and conferencing with the teacher along the way.

Routman (1988) advocates the use of process writing techniques in the classroom. Routman experienced wide success when using and helping other teachers in her school use processed writing in grades first, second, and third.

Routman as well as other teachers in her school focused on the writing process and conferenced with students as the students developed topics that they had decided to write about. Routman found that by focusing on the process of writing instead of the end product students were able to learn to write more effectively and actually experience the joy of being writers.

Atwell (1989) decided to try the processed writing approach when her junior high English students were having difficulty with writing. Even though Atwell had misgivings about it in the beginning her classroom soon evolved into a writer's workshop and students were taking chances with their writing. By focusing on how the students wrote and developed their topic, instead of only looking at and grading an end product, Atwell found that her students learned to write. Many of the teachers in Atwell's school joined in teaching processed writing, the process worked, the students were writing and loving it.

Instructional approaches which include teacher modeling of writing, activities that help students to write for a variety of audiences as well as purposes such as journal writing, letter writing, and writing of stories for different audiences and purposes, the use of positive feedback, the teaching of needed skills as the need arises based on the student's writing have been shown to

be effective while skills instruction in isolation from purposeful writing and negative or no feedback have been shown to be decidedly ineffective.

Atwell (1989), Burchby (1988), Calkins (1978), and Graves (1983) have all found that teacher modeling of the writing process with all of the recursive writing and rewriting until the writer is satisfied that the work is finished can only help students become better writers.

Heinze (1987) finds that journal writing gives an added dimension to writing for the student since the student may realize, for the first time, that writing is for much more than just communicating with another person, it is also for gaining insights into inner thoughts and feelings. Routman (1988) agrees and finds that a scheduled journaling time is an integral part of her student's writing program.

Graves (1983) finds that letter writing can open up new purposes and audiences for the student. Heath and Branscombe (1985) have found that when students write letters to others they develop deeper purposes, a better sense of an audience, and learn the mechanics of writing more effectively since they learn within the context of their own papers as they need to learn them.

Butler and Turbill (1987) suggest writing and publishing in a variety of forms for different audiences and purposes to expand the student's awareness of audiences

and purposes when writing. Graves (1983) states that students need to be aware of, as well as, focus their efforts on a specific audience when they write. Smith (1979) states that when students see that writing is natural and purposeful they will grow as writers.

Cooper (1979) and Good (1981) state that positive feedback can foster learning while negative or no feedback has a negative effect on how the students learns and may even keep the student from learning. Graves (1983) finds that when using the writing process teachers must conference with their students either individually or in small groups to give guidance as well as a feeling of support and positive and meaningful feedback as the student proceeds through the writing process so that the student becomes a better writer.

Graves (1983) finds that the teaching of skills in relation to the students' writing has been proven to be an effective way to teach skills since when the students really need the skills for what they are writing is when they will learn. Graves feels that when teaching skills in isolation from purposeful writing students never really internalize the skill being taught because they find no purpose in knowing it.

Monitoring of students' work through work samples and anecdotal records is a much more effective way to help

students become better writers according to Graves (1983), Murray (1982), and Smith (1983) since the process of how the students write is looked at and not just the end product with no knowledge of how the students got there.

A variety of approaches must always be used to strengthen any program of instruction due to the diversity of the students. The use of cooperative learning experiences, the writing process, instructional strategies including journal writing, letter writing, the writing of stories for different audiences and purposes, positive feedback, skills instruction in context with the students' writing, and the use of monitoring of written work by using work samples and anecdotal records may very well be the key to helping student develop the quality, quantity, and variety of their writing.

Description of Selected Solution

The writer's selected solutions were additions to the existing county language arts program and flowed naturally from the goals and objectives of the county. The solutions did not act as replacements to the current language arts program but augmented and enriched the language arts experience for those involved in this practicum.

A cooperative setting was used to increase the quantity, quality, and variety of writing among fifth-grade

students. They usually sat silently at their desks while engaged in writing with little or no interaction with classmates and were often asked to be silent when they did speak. Fifth-grade students worked in groups of three to form cooperative writing triads to conference with and coach members of the triad as individual members wrote their individual and original works. Slavin (1981) and Vygotsky (1978) state that when students work in isolation from other they are less likely to expand their thoughts and ideas and learn effectively. Brady and Jacobs (1988) have found that fourth and fifth grade students learn to write more effectively through the give and take of cooperative learning experiences after they are taught how to be good responders. The writer guided the students into becoming good responders for each other and used cooperative learning experiences during writing classes to help the students feel less isolated and frustrated when they wrote.

Each fifth-grade student also worked with one low-level language student from the first-grade classrooms in the writer's school to produce one or more stories a month in the form of a book. Coincidental to helping the first-grade students the fifth-grade students better internalized the writing process and, therefore, developed higher quality written work themselves while learning

another dimension of cooperative learning. Erickson (1989) states that students who are involved in collaboration make gains in skills as well as in attitudes about the subject being taught.

Students learned writing by using the writing process.

Students wrote on topics that they chose while going through the stages of prewriting, writing, rewriting, and publishing as they were encouraged to develop their ideas to the fullest of their potential. Graves (1978) and Murray (1982) state that when students go through the writing process as real life writers do they see themselves as writers and, therefore, become better writers.

Students used journal writing, letter writing, and writing stories to develop a variety of purposes and styles to write for a variety of audiences.

Students wrote in journals daily at regularly scheduled times so that they could discover that writing was for more than just the communicating of ideas but for other purposes as well as audiences. Simms (1984) states that journal writing may help students develop their writing abilities while they explore their feelings through using their own language.

Students wrote letters on a monthly basis so that they could discover a very specific audience as well as a specific purpose for writing. The letters were sent

to other fifth grade classes in the school and the school district, relatives of the students, friends of the students, the writer of the practicum, people and businesses in the community, state and country, and even Santa Claus, so that there was more variety and interest in letter writing. Heath and Branscombe (1985) state that by using letter writing students are better able to use written language for varied audiences and purposes while improving their writing.

Students were asked to use stories that they had written and rewrote them for different audiences as well as for different purposes so that the students developed a deeper sense of audience and purpose. Graves (1983) states that when students realize that they can write the same story for different purposes as well as audiences it gives the students greater meaning to and interest in their writing.

The writer created a positive setting with positive feedback when conferencing with students as they went through the writing process so that they would always put their best efforts forward when writing. A positive setting as well as positive feedback helped students to learn to the best of their ability. Good (1981) states that when students are reinforced with positive behavior they will show positive achievement. Graves (1983) states that

conferencing while students go through the writing process is an integral part of their learning process as well as the teacher's so that the teacher can learn more about how the student writes including what needs to be developed and what has already been developed.

Students learned skills that they needed as the need arose in their writing. As the writer conferenced with the students the writer will taught skills that were needed individually or in small groups. Graves (1983) states that skills need to be taught for meaningful purposes to the student or they will not be truly internalized.

The writer modeled the writing process and wrote whatever and whenever the students wrote so that the students would realize that every writer must go through the writing stages of prewrite, write, and rewrite in a very recursive way until the writer of the stories felt that they are ready to be published. Role models are needed by children through out their lives, therefore, having a role model for the writing process was a very natural way for students to learn and enjoy writing. Graves (1983) stresses the importance of role models and that students need to actually see their how others write.

The writer monitored students' writing through work samples and anecdotal records in order to assist the student writer and produce report card grades. Graves (1983) states

that observing how a student develops as a writer by keeping a folder of work done by the student along with anecdotal records of the student's progress is a much more accurate way of determining what a student knows about writing instead of the occasional skills tests.

The write conducted an in-service at the beginning of the year to share the the writing program that the writer used during the 1989/1990 school year. The writer shared the reasons for the program, how it worked, and invited interested teachers to make use of the practicum research and implement the program themselves. Other in-services were held as needed on request by the teachers as the school year progressed and a sharing session was needed. An in-service that was more of a sharing session took place the last month of the school year to discuss the practicum results. Atwell (1989) states that when her school started using the writing process it was only due to the teachers finding out for themselves that it worked and then, by teachers' personal experiences and knowledge gleaned from what they discovered, did other teachers start to use the writing process, also, not as a mandate from the administration.

The writer developd a writing program to be used by the classroom teacher that blended with the county curriculum and helped students to develop positive feelings

about writing while increasing the quantity, quality and variety of their writing.

Report of Action Taken

A detailed description of action taken by the writer will give a greater understanding to the writing program that was implemented. The steps that the writer took in implementing the program are numbered and placed in sequential order of implementation.

- I. The writer chose the practicum observer.
 - A. The program was discussed with the observer.
 - B. The writer advised the observer that updates would be made on the practicum from its implementation until its conclusion.
- II. Participants were selected for the program.
 - A. All fifth-grade students in the writer's language arts class were in the program.
 - B. First-grade students identified as low-level language students by their teachers had their parents contacted by the writer and the parents were asked to give permission for the students to participate in the program.
 - C. The program was explained to the parents

of the participants as well as the participants. Back to school night was used to explain the program to the parents and some individual meetings as needed.

III. The fifth-grade students in the program produced writing samples on topics they chose which were measured by using the Writing Assessment Instrument (see appendix C) and took a Student Writing Attitude Survey (see Appendix H) all were placed in individual writing folders for the students.

IV. A writing center was set up by the writer.

A. The supplies placed in the center consisted of paper, cans filled with pencils, crayons, boxes of colored pencils, sets of water colors, markers, scissors, tape, and dictionaries.

B. A guide was made for the writing process. It was in the form of a poster and stated that all writers needed to prewrite, write, rewrite, and then publish. Arrows drawn on the poster indicated the recursive manner in which a writer wrote.

V. The writer had the fifth-grade students keep a journal.

- A. The students journals were written in daily at the same time.
- B. The journals were collected and looked at by the writer at least once every week to check on the progress of the students.
- C. The journals were not corrected. Positive statements were written in the journals by the writer.
- D. The writer also kept a journal so that the students had a role model.

VI. Cooperative learning techniques were discussed with the fifth-grade students.

- A. Fifth-grade students were taught to use cooperative learning techniques while working with their peers and the first-grade students who came to the fifth-grade classroom.

VII. Fifth-grade students wrote in a cooperative setting with their peers.

- A. Fifth-grade students worked in groups consisting of three students called triads. The triads coached the individual members as they went through the writing process to complete individual written work. Individual members of the triads were expected to complete one piece of written

work per month to be shared with the class and then put in book form and placed in the school Media Center to be checked out by other students in the school.

- B. Fifth-grade students wrote and shared at least one poem per month. They were in the form of a cinquain, haiku, rap, rhymed verse, or free verse.
- C. Fifth-grade students used cooperative learning techniques when they worked in triads to write at least one letter each month.
 - 1. Triad members chose to write to the practicum writer, classmates, people known, or people unknown so that there was more of a variety and the interest remained high.
 - 2. Templates developed by the writer for personal as well as business letters were given to the triads so that the standard format for each was mastered.
 - 3. Triads worked on designing their own paper and envelopes to use in their letter writing activities and the writer provided the stamps and mailing

envelopes.

- D. Fifth-grade students were encouraged to use stories they had already written and wrote them with a different audience and purpose in mind.

VIII. First-grade students were selected for the program by their teachers and permitted to participate by their parents came to the fifth-grade classroom three times a week for 30 minutes each time during the fifth-grade language arts time block.

- A. A convenient time for all of the first grade students to come at the same time was set up with the first-grade teachers.
- B. Each fifth-grade student worked with one first-grade student on writing stories, poems, and letters.
- C. The first-grade students each published at least one story per month in a cooperative setting with the fifth-grade student assigned to them by the writer of the practicum.
 - 1. Stories were dictated to the fifth-grade students by the first-grade students, read, discussed, separated so that they could be made into a book by placing part of the story and a picture

on each page of the book. The book was then shared with the others in the classroom, shared with the first-grader's classroom, and then some were copied and placed in a special area in the Media Center to be shared with others in the school.

2. Fifth-grade students helped first-grade students read the stories to others in the fifth-grade classroom and to the first-grader's classroom.

- XI. The program that the writer of the practicum created was presented to interested teachers at an in-service.
 - A. Teachers attending the in-service were asked to take a pre Teacher Survey (see Appendix I).
 - B. The program was presented to the teachers.
 - C. Support was given to the teachers trying the program by the writer of the practicum in the way of sharing sessions as needed during the implementation of the program, most likely one a month.
 - D. Teachers were provided with all of the student monitoring techniques and instruments

that the writer of the practicum used to document each student's growth in the quantity, quality, and variety of writing.

- X. The writer will met with the program observer prior to the implementation of the program.
 - A. The writer explained the program in great detail.
 - B. The writer showed the observer the writing center.
 - C. The writer told the observer the dates and times that the fifth-grade students were working with the first-grade students so that the interaction could be observed.
- XI. The program was implemented for eight months.
 - A. A weekly log was kept by the writer on the state of the program.
 - B. The writing center was monitored so that supplies were always available.
 - C. A monthly Average Length of Daily Journal Entries Chart (see Appendix D), Writing Chart (see Appendix E), Compositional Variety Chart (see Appendix F), and Writing Audiences Chart (see Appendix G) were kept on each fifth-grade student in the program.
- XII. The culmination of the eight-month program.

- A A writing sample was taken from the fifth-graders' last month's writing of the program and assessed by using the Writing Assessment Instrument (see Appendix C). Fifth grade students were also given a post Student Writing Attitude Survey (see Appendix H). Teachers who had attended the in-services and took the pre Teacher Survey (see Appendix I) took the post Teacher Attitude Survey (see Appendix I).
- B. All results were compiled and evaluated for the final report.

Time Line

August - 1989

1. Discussed the program with the writer's observer.
2. Chose possible students to participate in the first-grade part of the program by conferring with the first grade teachers.
3. Organized the writing center and acquired notebooks to be used for journal writing.

September - 1989 --- April - 1990

1. Gave fifth-grade students and parents an overview of the program.
2. Conferred with parents of possible first-grade

participants and secured written permission slips.

3. Fifth-grade students created a writing sample on a topic of their choice during sustained writing time to be assessed by using the Writing Assessment Instrument (Appendix C). Individual student folders were made to hold this and all other student work or copies of student work.
4. Fifth-grade students took a pre Student Writing Attitude Survey (see Appendix H) about writing.
5. Fifth-grade students were taught how to work in a cooperative setting with their peers as well as the first-graders.
6. Implementation of the program for eight months.
7. Evaluation of the program by using a weekly log.
8. Presentation of an in-service to interested teachers, periodical updates through sharing session, and a pre and post Teacher Survey (see Appendix I) to evaluate the teachers' results.

May - 1990

1. Compiled and evaluated results.

June - 1990

1. Completed Report

CHAPTER V
RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The results of any project undertaken are always contingent on the action taken. The writer's practicum demonstrated positive results for all involved in it. Each of the objectives listed in Chapter III is discussed in the following section.

The first objective called for an improvement in each student's quality of writing in terms of the basic elements of content and mechanics by 20% based on the first and last writing samples by using the Writing Assessment Instrument (see Appendix C). Writing time was not a part of the day to look forward to when the practicum first started, but slowly students began to like to see their thoughts and ideas on paper and enjoyed sharing them with their classmates. Writing time became a time to enjoy the companionship of their peers in expressing themselves. When writing was interrupted by special school programs the students begged to write instead of doing other

subjects. Other subject areas also benefited. More thought went into all areas of written school work. Students were spending more time on all areas where writing was concerned and were very serious about their work. All students met the objective by the end of the practicum as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Results of Pre/Post Writing Assessment Instrument

Student	Pretest	Posttest	Improvement
A	20	30	50%
B	20	30	50%
C	20	30	50%
D	16	28	75%
E	20	30	50%
F	16	27	69%
G	15	25	66%
H	20	30	50%
I	20	30	50%
J	19	30	58%
K	18	28	55%
L	20	30	50%
M	20	30	50%
N	18	30	67%
O	19	27	42%
P	20	30	50%
Q	20	30	50%
R	20	30	50%
S	20	30	50%
T	20	30	50%
U	14	28	100%
V	20	30	50%
W	21	27	29%
X	20	30	50%
Y	24	30	25%

Note: Maximum score = 30

The second objective called for an increase in the quantity of voluntary writing in terms of increasing the number of words written and the number of works produced by 20%. The objective had two parts to it. The first part measured the average number of words per day of the first month and the last month. The writer kept a tally of the monthly averages of daily writing of each student on the Monthly Average Length of Daily Journal Entries Chart (see Appendix D). The objective was a success. The students wrote about topics and situations meaningful to themselves while developing their writing abilities without even realizing that they were learning. They expressed themselves without a fear of a grade and were often eager to share what they had written with their classmates and those meaningful to them. Writing took on a purpose and meaning. The students were eager to record their lives in their journals every morning. Writing became a habit for the students and something to be proud of and to share with others. The sharing of ideas written in the journals encouraged reluctant writers to write and to see that the words they put to paper were important, too. There was no right or wrong. There was only a bonding and a growing together as writers. The steady rise with only a few dips in the quantity of writing from the first month to the last month was 59% to 685% as shown on Table 4.

Table 4

Results of Monthly Average Length of Daily Journal Entries

Students	Months								Gain
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
A	29	35	38	40	73	50	52	51	76%
B	33	44	61	37	70	82	95	69	109%
C	55	56	57	55	55	85	99	98	78%
D	27	30	37	38	26	36	44	60	122%
E	15	30	63	69	48	60	64	69	360%
F	29	23	50	30	53	75	58	64	121%
G	32	35	58	66	66	30	69	85	166%
H	25	41	45	37	50	57	53	63	152%
I	21	28	28	42	61	49	53	120	471%
J	23	24	47	48	68	70	79	88	282%
K	14	24	40	44	61	70	43	110	685%
L	19	23	48	65	78	71	94	73	284%
M	16	36	59	86	87	54	93	70	338%
N	35	31	41	68	69	57	63	75	114%
O	32	54	51	42	59	65	65	51	59%
P	16	11	28	38	70	85	80	89	456%
Q	20	37	45	47	46	45	50	50	150%
R	25	12	16	20	30	55	51	87	625%
S	27	22	28	72	76	57	86	130	381%
T	30	31	62	69	63	71	68	71	136%
U	33	15	36	34	44	51	56	62	88%
V	34	32	19	37	49	60	63	64	88%
W	24	20	33	35	44	40	49	54	125%
X	22	36	37	37	63	120	122	125	468%
Y	12	13	33	44	44	42	41	44	267%

The second part of the objective measuring the quantity of voluntary writing finished the first month and the last month demonstrated the overwhelming success of the

practicum. The writer kept a tally on the Writing Chart (see Appendix E) and compared the quantity of work completed numerically. The eagerness to write in the journals carried over to voluntary writing. The improvement more than met the 20% anticipated outcome by reaching a 33% to 300% increase as shown on Table 5.

Table 5

Results of Writing Chart Tally

Student	Number of Writings Completed		
	First Month	Last Month	Improvement
A	2	5	150%
B	2	4	100%
C	2	5	150%
D	1	4	300%
E	3	4	33%
F	2	4	100%
G	2	4	100%
H	2	5	150%
I	3	5	67%
J	3	6	100%
K	1	4	300%
L	2	5	150%
M	2	5	150%
N	3	6	100%
O	2	4	100%
P	2	4	100%
Q	2	5	150%
R	1	3	200%
S	2	5	150%
T	2	4	100%
U	2	5	150%
V	2	4	100%
W	2	4	100%
X	2	7	250%
Y	2	5	150%

The third objective called for an increase in the variety of writing by increasing compositional and audience range by 20%. The objective consisted of two parts. The first part measured the variety of writing during sustained writing periods by using more of a variety of the six basic compositional forms including: description, exposition, persuasion, expression, narration, and poetry during the first two months and the last two months of the program. The writer kept a tally on The Compositional Variety Chart (see Appendix F). During the first two months the students wrote in only a very limited compositional variety using only 1 to 3 of the compositional varieties. The students ventured into writing in 3 to 6 of the compositional varieties by the last two months of the program. The objective was an overwhelming success. The students increased their compositional range and their interest in writing at the same time while encouraging their peers to attempt new compositional styles during cooperative writing sessions. The increase in compositional variety ranged from 67% to 300% when the first two months of the program were compared to the last two months of the programs shown on Table 6.

Table 6

Results of Compositional Variety Chart

Number of Compositional Varieties

Student	First Two Months	Last Two Months	Improvement
A	2	5	150%
B	2	5	150%
C	2	5	150%
D	1	4	300%
E	3	5	67%
F	2	5	150%
G	2	4	100%
H	2	6	200%
I	2	5	150%
J	3	4	100%
K	1	4	300%
L	2	6	200%
M	2	5	150%
N	2	5	150%
O	2	4	100%
P	2	4	100%
Q	2	4	100%
R	1	3	200%
S	2	5	150%
T	2	4	100%
U	2	4	100%
V	2	3	50%
W	2	5	150%
X	2	6	200%
Y	2	5	150%

Note: Maximum score = 6

The second part of the objective measured the variety of writing during voluntary writing periods by writing for a broader range of audiences including the teacher, classmates, people known, and people unknown. The first two and the last two months were compared. A tally was

kept on the Voluntary Writing Audiences Chart (see Appendix G). The objective was a success. The increase ranged from 100% to 300% as shown on Table 7.

Table 7
Results of Writing Audiences Chart

Student	Number of Varieties Completed		
	First Two Months	Last Two Months	Improvement
A	2	4	100%
B	2	4	100%
C	2	4	100%
D	2	4	100%
E	2	4	100%
F	2	4	100%
G	1	4	300%
H	2	4	100%
I	2	4	100%
J	2	4	100%
K	2	4	100%
L	2	4	100%
M	2	4	100%
N	2	4	100%
O	2	4	100%
P	2	4	100%
Q	2	4	100%
R	2	4	100%
S	2	4	100%
T	2	4	100%
U	2	4	100%
V	1	4	300%
W	2	4	100%
X	2	4	100%
Y	2	4	100%

Note: Maximum score = 4

The fourth objective stated that when students were

given a pre and post Attitude Survey (see Appendix H) they would demonstrate a positive improvement in feelings about writing of 20%. As noted on Table 8, the objective was met by every student in the program.

Table 8
Results of Student Writing Attitude Survey

Student	Pretest	Posttest	Improvement
A	22	30	36%
B	20	30	50%
C	21	30	43%
D	22	30	36%
E	16	30	88%
F	22	30	36%
G	22	30	36%
H	20	30	50%
I	24	30	25%
J	24	30	25%
K	18	27	50%
L	22	30	36%
M	23	30	30%
N	13	23	77%
O	22	30	36%
P	22	30	36%
Q	24	30	25%
R	23	30	30%
S	20	30	50%
T	22	30	36%
U	18	30	66%
V	20	30	50%
W	20	30	50%
X	20	28	40%
Z	23	29	26%

Note: Maximum score = 30

The fifth objective stated that teachers at the writer's school would be presented with the writer's program, asked to try the program, and measure changes in their students' writing by filling out a pre and post Teacher Survey (see Appendix I). It was estimated that a 20% change would result. The teachers participating found that there was a 38% to 100% increase in the writing of their students after using the program and attending the formal and informal sharing sessions as indicated on Table 9.

Table 9
Results of Pre/Post Teacher Survey

Teacher	Pretest	Posttest	Improvement
A	6	10	66%
B	8	11	38%
C	7	12	71%
D	6	12	100%
E	7	12	71%

Note: Maximum score = 18

Based on the measured objectives and the writer's observations throughout the practicum, students appeared to demonstrate a positiveness and eagerness about writing while writing alone or in cooperative groups.

Conclusion

All of the objectives of this practicum were fully achieved. The countywide language arts program was enhanced by the cooperative process writing program. Students increased the quantity, quality, and variety of their writing when pre and post results were compared and demonstrated positive feelings about writing, in general, by the culmination of the eight-month practicum implementation period. The participants in the writing program made significant gains in achievement and attitudes related to writing during the practicum.

The cooperative writing setting helped students realize that writing does not have to be done in a solitary way but can be done through the guidance and help of peers as well as the writer. The lively and friendly interaction of ideas and assistance helped all express their ideas more effectively and more fully.

Slavin (1981) stated that students are better able to relate to subjects and internalize ideas being taught while working in cooperative settings. As the writer guided the students to work in a cooperative setting interest in writing peaked. A positive feeling developed in the students having to do with writing while working during the language block of time or during other times that

included social studies, science, and even mathematics. Students became partners in writing with their peers and became very concerned that they were truly helping to develop written projects to become as complete and polished as possible. As the students became more accustomed to the cooperative working relationship the quantity of work increased in journal writing and in the number of works finished, the variety of works increased as the students wrote for wider audiences and in more diverse compositional styles, the quality improved in content and mechanics, and a heightened interest and love of writing developed in all of the students in the program. Writing was "in"; not writing was "out". Participants in the practicum eagerly sought the advice and help of their peers as they finished stories that they took to the lunchroom and out on the recess to finish. Writing and working together became high priority.

The cooperative setting enhanced the first-grade and fifth-grade writing setting. The fifth-grade students eagerly helped the first-grade students write their stories in a cooperative manner. The fifth-grade and the first-grade students bonded in only a few days and wrote and drew wonderful stories together. The fifth-graders more completely internalize the writing process and the mechanics and content of writing while helping the

first-grade students write their thoughts and ideas. Coincidental to all that the fifth-grader students gained from the experience, the first-grade students became better writers, readers, and developed new friendships in the process. All involved in the cooperative setting of the practicum became winners in that they learned to become better writers and developed new friendships,

Graves (1978) and Smith (1983) stated that when students learn to write using processed writing they are more successful since a fuller meaning is developed for writing because the students choose and develop their own topics. When the students were able to write on topics meaningful to them they more fully developed their topics and were much more careful with the mechanics and content of their finished work. As the participants became more eager and actively involved in their writing projects because the ideas were theirs and not imposed from outside they developed a more complete understanding of writing and were more successful writers.

Burchby (1988), Calkins (1978), and Graves (1983) found that teacher modeling of the writing process not only developed a better understanding in writing for the students, but the teacher and students bonded together as writers. When the writer of the practicum modeled the writing process the students realized that all writers

must use the writing stages and are more successful when using the writing process and writing on topics meaningful to themselves. The sharing of thoughts and ideas written while modeling the writing process and the writing stages of prewrite, write, revise, and publish brought the participants of the practicum and the writer closer and a true bond developed as all became writers together.

Heinze (1987) stated that students may very well gain a better understanding of writing through journal writing while they develop insights into their own thoughts and ideas. Participants in the practicum and the writer of the practicum wrote in daily journals. A special feeling was created by the sharing of our daily lives with all of the happy, sad, and in-between moments. There were times when participants wanted to read their journals to the class as a whole or kept just between the writer of the practicum and the participant. A fuller understanding of writing as an outlet of feelings was developed. Writing was no longer just a scribble on a page to finish an assignment. Writing came alive for all involved in the practicum.

Graves (1983) stated that students need to write for a variety of audiences to better understand writing. Fifth-grade participants in the practicum were encouraged to write in the six basic compositional styles of

description, exposition, persuasion, expression, narration, and poetry for a variety of audiences including the teacher, classmates, people known, and people unknown. Participants wrote in a variety of styles and for a variety of audiences. They became knowledgeable and considered themselves experts at writing. They became active participants in their own education. They worked in a cooperative setting to encourage and help their peers to express themselves in different compositional styles for a variety of audiences. Many finished written works were changed from one compositional style to another and the audiences changed for the fun of doing it. Writing became an exciting challenge to conquer.

Cooper (1979) stated that when positive expectations are exhibited by those meaningful to the students they are more likely to learn what is being taught. The writer agrees with Cooper. When students were given positive input about their writing it caused them to increase the quantity and quality of their writing and to be more willing to seek and give advice in the cooperative setting. Students were graded by using an on-going assessment of improvement as opposed to a grade for each and every written work. Students continually improve their writing without the fear of grades to get in the way. The improvements were dramatic. Many parents of the participants commented

that they could see dramatic results and asked for advice for other children in the family as well as themselves. The students gained overwhelming confidence in themselves with the positive feedback and writing became something to do instead of being avoided.

Graves (1983) stated that when skills are taught in isolation students are less likely to master them. The writer supports Graves' conclusions. When the participants corrected mistakes made in their own written works they seldom made them again and were usually very eager to share their new knowledge with students in their cooperative groups thereby truly internalizing the concept. Students never seemed to forget the lessons they learned from their experiences and were eager to share their new found insights. When the fifth-grade students worked with the first-grade students they were free to impart their understanding of the mechanic and content of writing and truly internalize the material forever while teaching others.

The writer will continue the writing program during the next school year. The writing center will be expanded and re-supplied. The fifth-grade and the first-grade students will receive a letter to go home the first week of school informing their parents that they will participate in the writing program during the school year.

In conclusion, the writer would like to expand, refine, and share the practicum in order to reach as many language arts teachers and students as possible.

Recommendations

The writer provides the following recommendations for those planning to use the writing program.

1. Be sure to use a positive mind set whenever discussing and teaching writing.
2. Teach students how to work cooperatively and coach them as needed.
3. Teach older students how to help younger children so that the story ideas generated come from the younger children.
4. Place desks in a manner that is conducive to cooperative work.
5. Provide a sufficient number of appropriate sized chairs for students so that younger and older children will be able to write together in a comfortable setting.
6. Have a sign-up area for students who need immediate conference.
7. Keep conferences 2 to 5 minutes so that all students have access to feedback.
8. Circulate frequently so that students can

- freely share their ideas and progress.
9. Write and share your own stories frequently so that a writing community is created.
 10. Make sure students coach you through the writing process so that a special bond among writers is formed.
 11. Make sure to provide lots of time for sharing as well as writing.
 12. Be aware that this program may cause a noise level that may rise and fall as the excitement of sharing ideas grows into full bloom writing.

Dissemination

The writer feels that in ending this practicum the writing program is only in its beginning stages. Many teachers at the writer's school as well as other schools have shown interest in the practicum. Many teachers are aware of the practicum and are using many of the instructional ideas that are included in it.

The writer plans to conduct a school based and possibly a district based inservice to present the ideas set forth in the practicum during the first week of school during the next school year.

The writer will make copies of the practicum available in the school Media Center as well as the District Media

Center so that an expanded audience can have access to the practicum and its ideas.

References

- Atwell, N. (1989). Writing workshop. American Educator, 13(1), 14-21, 45-50.
- Brady, S. & Jacobs, S. (1988). Children Responding to children: Writing groups and classroom community. In T. Newkirk & N. Atwell (Eds.), Understanding writing (pp. 142-150). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.
- Brandt, R. (1988). On students' needs and team learning: A conversation with William Glasser. Educational Leadership, 45(6), 38-45.
- Butler, A. & Turbill, J. (1987). Towards a reading-writing classroom. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.
- Burchby, M. (1988). Literature and whole language. The New Advocate, 1(2), 114-123.
- Calkins, L. M. (1978). Children discover what writers know. Learning, April, 34-37.
- Calkins, L. M. (1986). The art of teaching writing. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.
- Cooper, H. M. (1979). Pygmalion grows up: A model for teacher expectations, communication, and performance influence. Review of Educational Research, 49(3), 389-410.
- Dyson, A. H. (1987). The value of "time off task". Young Children's spontaneous talk and deliberate text. Havard Educational Review, 57(4), 396-420.
- Erickson, F. (1989). Research currents: Learning and collaboration in teaching. Language Arts, 66(4), 430-441.
- Good, T. L. (1981). Teacher expectations and student perceptions: A decade of research. Educational Leadership, 38(5), 415-422.

- Graves, D. H. (1978). Balance the basics: Let them write. Learning, April, 30-33.
- Graves, D. H. (1983). Writing: Teachers and children at work. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.
- Heath, S. B. & Branscombe, A. (1985). Intelligent writing in an audience community: Teacher, students, and researcher. In S. W. Freedman (Ed.), The acquisition of written language: Response and revision (pp.3-32), Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Heinze, C. (1987) Gaining insight through journaling. Academic Therapy, 22(5), 489-495.
- Howard, J. (1984). The unvarnished, gospel truth about writing in school. American Educator, 8(4), 26-29, 43.
- Johnson, T. D. & Louis, D. R. (1987). Literacy through literature. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.
- Murray, D. M. (1982). Learning by teaching selected articles on writing and teaching. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.
- Pierce, M. M. & Van Houten, R. (1984). Involving your students in the educational process: Partnership in the classroom. The Pointer, 29(1), 38-45.
- Reetz, L. J. (1987). This letter is for you! Academic Therapy, 22(4), 375-380.
- Routman, R. (1988). Transitions from Literature to Literacy. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.
- Simms, R. B. (1984). Techniques for improving student writing. Academic Therapy, 19(5), 597-584.
- Slavin, R. E. (1981). Synthesis of research on cooperative learning. Educational Leadership, 38(8), 655-659.
- Smith, F. (1979). The language arts and the learner's mind. Language Arts, 56(2), 118-125.

Smith, F. (1983). Reading like a writer. Language Arts, 60(5), 558-567.

Staton, J. (1980). Writing and counseling: Using a dialogue journal. Language Arts, 57(5), 514-518.

Teale, W. (1982). Toward a theory of how children learn to read and write. Language Arts, 56(5), 555-567.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

-- County Board of Education. (1988-1989). Basic educational programs in -- County.

-- County Board of Education. (1987-1988). -- Elementary School annual report 1987-1988.

-- County Board of Education. (1987-1988). -- Elementary School five year self study for -- Association of Schools and Colleges.

-- County Board of Education. (1988). Report of the superintendent and school board.

APPENDIX A
STUDENT CREATIVE WRITING SURVEY

Student Creative Writing Survey

1=Never 2=Sometimes 3=Always

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Do you enjoy writing stories? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. | Do you ever write stories when you are not in school? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. | Do you think writing is an important way to communicate your thoughts and ideas? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. | Do you want to be a better writer? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. | Do you feel that more school time should be spent on writing? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. | Do you feel nervous when your teacher tells the class that you are going to write a story in class? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. | Have you ever written a story to share with another person other than your teacher or parents? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. | Have you ever kept a journal? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. | Have you ever felt that your ideas were not good enough to write about? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. | Have you ever felt that you would like to learn how to write better? | 1 | 2 | 3 |

APPENDIX B
TEACHER CREATIVE WRITING SURVEY

Teacher Creative Writing Survey

77

1=Never 2=Sometimes 3=Always

- | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|
| 1. | Do you feel that your students need to improve their writing skills? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. | Do you have your students write stories on a regular basis? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. | Do your students have difficulty writing complete sentences? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. | Do your students have trouble with punctuation? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. | Do your students score low on language tests? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. | Do you feel frustrated when correcting students' stories due to mistakes in grammar? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. | Do your students want to share their original stories? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. | Do you feel that teaching writing skills from your textbook carries over to writing in other areas? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. | Do you avoid teaching creative writing? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. | Do you feel that you would teach more creative writing if you had a guide to teach creative writing geared to the K-6 teachers that is easy to follow and complements our language textbook and the Developmental Writing Program? | 1 | 2 | 3 |

APPENDIX C
WRITING ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Writing Assessment Instrument

Student _____ Date _____

Story Title _____

Content Rating:

1 =No Development 2 =Slight Development 3 =Well Developed

Organizational Structure	1	2	3
Sentence Structure	1	2	3
Paragraph Structure	1	2	3
Topic Used	1	2	3
Audience Awareness	1	2	3

Mechanics Rating:

1 = Severe Errors 2 = Frequent Errors 3 = No or Few Errors

Grammar	1	2	3
Punctuation	1	2	3
Capitalization	1	2	3
Spelling	1	2	3
Handwriting	1	2	3

APPENDIX D

MONTHLY AVERAGE LENGTH OF DAILY JOURNAL ENTRIES CHART

81

[illegible]

APPENDIX E
WRITING CHART

Writing Chart

Student	First Month*	Last Month*

* Number of completed works during sustained writing periods.

APPENDIX F
COMPOSITIONAL VARIETY CHART

Compositional Variety Chart

Student Name _____

First Two MonthsLast two months

<u>Writing Style</u>	<u>Tally</u>	<u>Writing Style</u>	<u>Tally</u>
----------------------	--------------	----------------------	--------------

Description -

Description -

Exposition -

Exposition -

Persuasion -

Persuasion -

Expression -

Expression -

Narration -

Narration -

Poetry -

Poetry -

APPENDIX G
WRITING AUDIENCES CHART

Writing Audiences Chart

Student _____

Audience	First Two Months	Last Two Months
	Tally	Tally
Teacher	-	
Classmates	-	
People Known	-	
People unknown		

APPENDIX H
STUDENT WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY

Student Writing Attitude Survey

Student _____ (Pre/Post)

1 = Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Always

1. Do you enjoy writing stories?
1 2 3
2. Is it easy for you to write stories?
1 2 3
3. Do you think writing is a good way to share your thoughts?
1 2 3
4. Do you feel good about the stories that you write?
1 2 3
5. Do you feel that you should write every day in order
to be a better writer?
1 2 3
6. Do you like sharing your stories with others?
1 2 3
7. Do you feel comfortable when following the write, revise,
rewrite, and publish format when you write?
1 2 3
8. Is journal writing an enjoyable way to become a better
writer?
1 2 3
9. Do you feel confident and not worry when you write?
1 2 3
10. Is writing fun for you?
1 2 3

APPENDIX I
TEACHER SURVEY

Teacher Survey

Name _____ Date _____

pre/post (circle one)

1 = never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Always

1. My students use the writing process when writing. 1 2 3
2. My students demonstrate high quality when writing based on the Writing Assessment Instrument presented at the in-service. 1 2 3
3. The quantity of my students' writing is high when a count of the words written on a sample of writing is taken. 1 2 3
4. My students write for a wide variety of audiences. 1 2 3
5. My students make use of a wide variety of compositional forms. 1 2 3
6. My students enjoy writing. 1 2 3